



“RAMAPHORIA” - A BOURGEOIS DECEPTION

The unceremonious removal of ex-President Jacob Zuma in early 2018 was followed by the jubilant introduction of Cyril Ramaphosa as his replacement. The bourgeois media and liberal commentators were quick to hail him as the Saviour of South Africa's failing economy; thereby adding to a general sense of relief that the country finally got rid of the corrupt Zuma administration. Soon hereafter, the catch word 'Ramaphoria' started doing the rounds. The word plays on the euphoria that accompanied Ramaphosa's presidency. Here, one should be mindful of two possible scenarios: (i) were people really euphoric about Ramaphosa or more relieved that the vilest forms of corruption have been eliminated? (ii) The coining of names and its popularisation (especially by the bourgeois media) is a sophisticated and old propaganda ploy aimed at duping the labouring masses into accepting a predetermined narrative. Words such as 'Native Representative Council' and 'Tri-cameral Parliament' were also used to trick the labouring masses into believing that these bogus institutions were *their* institutions, designed to serve *them*. Likewise 'Ramaphoria' creates the impression that Ramaphosa represents the interests of *all* and *everyone* should welcome his presidency. Nothing could be further from the truth.

From Trade Unionist To Business Tycoon

Cyril Ramaphosa's humble beginnings as an astute trade union organiser and negotiator, stands in stark contrast to his career as a paid politician and business tycoon. One of the Mandela favourites, he quickly rose to prominence within the ANC and served as one of the party's top negotiators at Kempton Park. It was here where a negotiated political settlement saw the entrenchment of white monopoly capital and privilege through the constitutional protection of private property. In exchange, Ramaphosa and his struggle compatriots received a substantial share of white monopoly capital from the master's table through the implementation of lucrative Black Economic Empowerment policies. Incidentally, Ramaphosa who has proven to be one of its most favoured beneficiaries played an integral role in formulating the first set of BEE programmes. After being side-

lined as presidential candidate by the ascendancy of Thabo Mbeki as the successor to Mandela, Ramaphosa entered business on a full time basis. He served as director on various blue chip company boards and is a shareholder in most of them as well. It is this new-found opulence that saw him excelling financially as one of Africa's wealthiest people with an estimated worth of US\$450 million. [Norimitsu Onishi, *My Times*, internet article 15/02/2018]

The Marikana Albatross

It was as one of the directors of the Lonmin platinum mine that the true nature of Ramaphosa was exposed. His personal wealth became so interlocked with that of his generous bourgeois compatriots, that he had no choice but to betray the self-same working class he had built and organized a few decades ago. Although he was absolved from involvement in the massacre of 34 mineworkers, let us evaluate his words on that fateful day and judge for ourselves. He perceived the "wildcat" strike of these exploited workers as "*dastardly criminal and must be characterized as such.*" He added, "*In line with this characterization, there needs to be concomitant action to address this situation.*" [Norimitsu Onishi, *My Times*, internet article 15/02/2018] Indeed, a master negotiator, fully understanding the power of words, Mr Ramaphosa ensured that his criticism of the strike could not implicate him in the subsequent deaths of 34 people and the resultant trauma on their families. After all, he had to maintain the semblance of still being a comrade! *Dastardly* and *criminal*? These are harsh words, meaning acts so vile, it should be addressed through punishment. How else are criminals treated? What Ramaphosa is cowardly shying away from, ➡

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➡ is calling the workers criminals to their face. But such is the nature of political opportunists. After calling their actions 'criminal', he proceeded with his sophistry and invoked the might of the law to deal with these dastardly criminal elements. His masters could not have been more pleased with him for rationalising their brutal exploitation of workers and safe-guarding their economic interests now that he shared a piece of the pie. It should be added that this is a strategy they employed in South Africa with equal success when they co-opted white Afrikanerdom into a predominantly British-owned economy not so long ago in our history. Let us quickly remind Mr Ramaphosa of the real dastardly criminal elements, as he seems to suffer from political amnesia, caused no doubt by a healthy dose of lucrative company shares. It was British imperialism, aided by racist herrenvolkism, that raped and plundered SA through *dastardly criminal* acts of land dispossession (without compensation!), political oppression and suppression, as well as the crudest form of economic exploitation that generated the super profits on which white monopoly capitalists built their empires. Let us also remind Mr Ramaphosa that apart from his ilk, the labouring masses have not seen the redress of *any* of these historical and present atrocities perpetrated against them. In fact, under your Party's watch, Mr President, two innocent children recently died as a direct result of dire poverty stricken conditions by drowning in human excrement in a place where they were supposed to be safe and receive an education.

Ramaphoria or Ramaphobia?

The working class is made to believe that President Ramaphosa will provide a turn-around strategy for SA's failing economy. The positive response of the market to his presidency, coupled with the economic growth in the agricultural sector, the stabilization of the Rand and his fight against corruption, are all advanced as reasons for his new-found popularity. As far as the corruption clean-up argument goes and truth be told, the Devil would have appeared more saintly compared to the Zuma administration! Interestingly enough, for most of Zuma's tenure as President, then Deputy President Ramaphosa remained absolutely quiet on all the administration's excesses. Only after it became clear that Zuma was backing a different candidate to succeed him as president, did the 'anti-corruption hero persona' emerge from Ramaphosa's side. He even went so far as to declare his suspicion of Zuma's guilt in the Fezekile Kuzwayo/Zuma rape case, after keeping quiet for so long. [Herman Mashaba, News24 internet article 14/12/2017] Such, once again, is the nature of political opportunists. In addition to all of these, let us spell out why 'Ramaphoria' is dangerous and should be regarded as 'Ramaphobia' by the working class. Mr

Ramaphosa represents the interests of the bourgeois class. He has personally sided with them as demonstrated by the Marikana atrocity. His solution for a new prosperous SA is a capitalist economy. Before looking at the current economic reality, let us ask Mr Ramaphosa what economy we have been living under for at least the past century, if not a capitalist economy? Let us also remind Mr Ramaphosa that this economy was built on the backs of the exploited labouring masses that he could so easily characterize as acting in a 'dastardly criminal' manner. But more importantly, thanks to him and his ilk, it's an economy that has not seen the redistribution of wealth in the interest of the labouring masses, or the redistribution of dispossessed land to its rightful owners. Worsening this already tragic state of affairs, under the watch of the ANC, SA has officially grown into the most unequal country in the world. (Ironically, in the face of this abject poverty, Mr Ramaphosa readily accepted a R 700 000.00 increase in his salary, making him one of the top earning politicians globally.) As if the aforementioned proof of the dismal failure of the capitalist economy for the working class is not absurd enough, the workers are blamed for the negative growth of the economy! Stringent labour laws, low productivity, inadequate education, industrial unrest and service delivery protests are all cited as reasons for low investor confidence. They remain conspicuously silent on how after Apartheid, the personal riches of the top layers of society, including the new black elite, have grown at the expense of starving and increasingly under-resourced communities, who after 24 years of self-indulgent ANC rule, had no other choice but to take to the streets. Today the onslaught of the Bourgeois state continues unabated. We have seen attempts to undermine hard-won worker rights through the proposed amendment of labour laws which could translate into limiting industrial action and sanctioning starvation wages, among others. The Mining Charter is also under review after it emerged from the bosses in, a resounding jeremiad, that poor communities would benefit too much and their precious investors would stand to lose too much. (One wonders if such a loss to them would reflect in one luxury yacht, penthouse or private jet less) Incredulously, more than a century of solely benefitting from these mines is not enough! What Ramaphosa and his ilk do not tell us is that under the capitalist economy, wealth is becoming more concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. It is also well observed that in the poorest regions of the world, especially in the so-called pro-free market models, poverty is not eradicated but actually intensified. In an inexorable drive to become more competitive and profitable, companies either further suppress labour costs or employ new technologies to replace labour-intensive ones, leading to large ➡

➔ scale job losses and an inability of the economy to compensate for job losses with new job opportunities. It is ultimately, an economy designed to serve the interest of private individuals who generate maximum profit through exploiting the social labour of the working class. Environmental destruction, protectionism, austerity measures (i.e. punishing the poor) to enforce fiscal discipline, fabricated wars (i.e. to secure environmentally destructive commodities like oil/petrochemicals and to create a market for the sale of military hardware), xenophobia, national debt repayment schemes and increasing economic speculation across world markets (that does not add to real production at all)

have become standard features of this so called Free Market Economy. This is an economic system that flagrantly disregards not only the global working class, but earth herself.

Let us not be hoodwinked by Ramaphoria. Ramaphosa is not our saviour! The working class is capable of freeing itself from the bondage that they are kept in by the oppressor bourgeois class. Only through their own initiatives, based on principled and programmatic struggle in the interest of the working class and the landless peasantry, can SA move towards a democracy for all its people. Aluta continua! ●

TAXING WORKERS TO ENRICH CAPITALISTS

The 2018 recommendations of government's Tax Review Committee form a multipronged assault on the working majority in order to enrich a privileged capitalist minority. Masked by a thin veneer of pro-poor rhetoric, these brutal anti-working class measures re-inforce the blows of yet another austerity budget delivered on 21 February 2018; a budget which complies with the dictates of credit rating agencies and investors greedy for profit.

The Finance Minister appointed this Tax Committee for a five-year term in 2013, headed by Judge Dennis Davis. Since its appointment, this Committee has been advising the Finance Ministry on how to bring the country's tax regime in line with the neoliberal agenda set out in the 2030 National Development Plan. National Treasury basically used a special report that experts, appointed to this Tax Committee compiled to justify the VAT increase from 14% to 15% on 1 April 2018. It is common knowledge that VAT inflates the prices that the final consumers of goods and services must pay. This implies that the burden of VAT falls mainly on the poorest classes in society. This is the core problem that the Davis Tax Committee has hopelessly evaded through an appeal to the myths, fallacies and lies of bourgeois economic reasoning.

Another expert report investigated South Africa's readiness for a comprehensive wealth tax, which includes all taxes on the ownership of capital, financial investments, property (estate duties) and donations. Chapter 5 of this report suggests a compelling urgency for such a tax: "The evidence presented on wealth distribution in South Africa has shown that the top 10 per cent of the population own more than 90 per cent of total wealth in the country – leaving 80 per cent of the population with virtually no wealth." (Davis Tax Committee, *2018 Wealth Tax Feasibility Report*, p52) Yet contrary to this fact, the experts concluded that South Africa is far from ready for a comprehensive wealth tax! This conclusion, which directly contradicts the best evidence they assembled, not only boggles the mind but illustrates the class interests the Davis Tax Committee serves.

It is a conclusion premised on blind and deep faith in bourgeois ideology and capitalism. It exposes the Davis Tax Committee for what it really is: apologists for capitalism!

Resistance to this latest onslaught on workers has been sporadic and highly uneven. Trade unions have been at the forefront of campaigns against the VAT increase but their opposition and alternatives to this attack on the living standards of working people differ. Some unions reject VAT in its totality ('Scrap VAT!') whilst others simply want a longer list of zero-rated items based on 'the food basket of the average poor family'. The inescapable fact is that the VAT burden weighs on us all – employed, jobless, pensioners or students – and therefore demands a united and determined struggle against it. It calls for a united front against the state taxing the working people for the enrichment of the capitalists.

It is worth repeating that taxes remain the dominant source of government income and the contributions of workers to this 'societal fund' stretch far beyond paying VAT and taxes deducted from wages. As a case in point, think about where corporate taxes come from. In the final analysis, it is a fraction of the profits and wealth that capitalists accumulate from worker exploitation ('surplus value expropriated from labour power'). This means that the labour power of the working majority is the prime source from which the state finances its budgets. And yet the post-apartheid state has been cutting corporate tax rates from around 43% in the 1990s to roughly 28% today – coupled with other handouts to capitalists (tax rebates, subsidies, etc.). These austerity schemes allow capitalists to pocket more profits which they can then spend as they see fit. This is but one of countless machinations of how the bourgeois state serves their masters in plundering the social wealth that workers produce but do not benefit from. In order to end this rampant theft, working people must fight for a state under their direct control and management. ●

APDUSA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2018

APDUSA hosted its annual conference in Germiston on 26 May 2018. The conference took place two months after a successful political school that took place in Cape Town. In view of the intensive political debates that took place at the political school, the organisation decided to have an abbreviated one-day conference in 2018. The conference was attended by delegates from branches in Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and Western Cape. Delegates debated critical challenges facing the working class and landless peasantry in the current period and how to advance the political programme in this situation.

Conference noted the increasing number of struggles across the country in response to increasing levels of poverty faced by the working class and landless peasants. Our increased economic hardships are a direct result of the policies of the corrupt pro-capitalist ANC government.

It was also noted that corrupt and politically opportunistic leaders within the social movements and trade unions are trying to hijack the legitimate struggles of workers and communities. These attempts are manifested in recent splits in the trade union movement. Conference resolved to do all within the power of the organisation to expose the machinations of these bankrupt trade union bureaucrats and self-appointed leaders who wants to misdirect the legitimate struggles of the working class into ineffective ventures.

Delegates have also recognised the significance

of the emergence of embryonic workplace based committees under the direct control of the workers during many worker struggles. This represents an important breakthrough in the independence of workers from politically bankrupt trade union bureaucrats. Conference therefore resolved that APDUSA should work to to strengthen and promote workplace based committees into a growing movement of workers to bring unions under the direct control of the rank and file.

Many radicalised trade unionists have also been promoting the deceitful notion for the construction of an anti-capitalist workers' party based on the unprincipled Freedom Charter. How can one reject the pro-capitalist African National Congress (ANC), and at the same time promote the Freedom Charter, the very same political programme on which the ANC is based?

In contrast to this, delegates resolved to promote the regroupment of left anti-capitalist forces for the construction of a broad political movement against capitalism. This movement should be based on a programme in which the interests of the workers and landless peasantry are paramount.

Delegates committed to work tirelessly to strengthen the functionality of the APDUSA and to raise the political consciousness of its membership in order to implement its conference resolutions and to fulfil its political goals and tasks. ●

POLITICAL CURRENTS IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

The political picture in the province is still dominated by the African National Congress and its allies, the South African Communist Party and COSATU. Alongside this Tripartite Alliance are the following parties: the Democratic Alliance, which leads opposition in the Northern Cape Legislature, assisted by the Economic Freedom Fighters and the Congress of the People. Outside of the Northern Cape Legislature are APDUSA, The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and lesser known groupings including district based organizations called *forums*. These forums do have an impact on the political situation in that some of them have managed to be elevated to being representatives of sections of communities where the ANC has been found wanting.

In addition to the above, a number of ANC community leaders have contested local government elections as independent candidates and some were actually elected as councillors.

The battle for control over workers is worth mentioning, given the fact that the South African

Liberated Public Sector Workers Union (SALIPSWU), aligned to the new, militant South African Federation of Trade Unions, is challenging the related COSATU affiliated unions for the leadership of the affected workers. They have already made inroads into the civil sector and are busy recruiting Community Based Health Workers, who seem to be given the cold shoulder by the National Education and Health Workers' Union (NEHAWU).

The National Union of Mine Workers has in the recent past been in the news for the right reasons, mobilising workers in the mining sector for wage increases and better working conditions. These struggles did not draw much attention and the community in general was not moved by this activity.

Factional battles within the ANC are at an all-time high, since the ushering in of a new Provincial Executive Committee. The current Premier, Sylvia Lucas and her hangers-on declined to stand for election at the Provincial Conference. This paved the way for the faction led by the former Secretary General, Zamani Saul to be elected as the new PEC. This took place amidst accusations and ➔

➔ counter-accusations of vote rigging and, above all, the dominant newspaper story that millions of rand used for the conference reportedly originated from the Department of Provincial Treasury.

The Premier reshuffled the cabinet hours before the start of the ANC Provincial Conference and this was largely seen as a way of trying to destabilise the Zamdesh faction. This reshuffling did not last long because, subsequent to the conference, the new PEC called for another reshuffling of the cabinet to ensure that the newly elected members are included and those MECs who were removed are replaced. And the replacement of the sacked MECs was done quietly although the Premier refused to do so until the matter was referred to the ANC National Executive Committee, including undue pressure from the Provincial Executive.

The ANC musical chairs is continuing. It is never over until the fat lady sings. Another cabinet reshuffle was proposed by the ANC PEC, at the same time reiterating that the centre of power is not Government but the African National Congress. Two members were recalled from the National Assembly with a view to appointing them to positions in the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature, but this did not take place as smoothly as expected, because the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Alvin Botes refused to hand in his resignation. He was given an extension, which he did not honour. To add to the challenges of the PEC, the ANC Youth League called on the MEC to stay put.

All is not well within the African National Congress. The branches are in a state of disrepair

and they have planned to have regional conferences, but the faction of the Premier League is opposed to the regional conferences. All in the name of being against vote rigging, corruption and so on and so forth. Regional Executive Members fight with each other not only verbally but end up exchanging physical blows, whilst the PEC and NEC looks on.

The courts are also brought in to assist in resolving these matters to the extent that the Provincial Conference is being challenged by the Premier league. The problem with this is that the population ends up being spectators waiting for the outcome instead of being involved in resolving issues that are affecting them.

A number of the ANC members are very disappointed and are at the point of checking as to whether their political positions are still relevant. And at the same time the APDUSA and the PAC are in the rebuilding process and people are becoming more tolerant in terms of reading and listening to different political viewpoints. The political landscape is definitely in favour of the left voices and if this opportunity is not optimally used, the next general elections will entrench the views and positions of the ANC, DA, EFF, etc, given the fact that when people get disgruntled with the ANC, they move to DA or EFF.

Therefore we must step up our propaganda machinery and not only limit ourselves to our newsletter but explore other avenues like publishing articles in the mainstream media as individuals, organize open meetings or viewing of films that will stimulate discussions amongst the oppressed. ●



From Around the World

VENEZUELA'S MAY 2018 ELECTION: A VOTE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

The victory of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela's recent presidential election is an indicator of the momentum of the Bolivarian revolution, particularly its anti-imperialist impetus.

This is evident from Maduro's margin of victory over his nearest political opponent, Henri Falcón, amid widespread social crises that the enemies of Chavismo have been fomenting to overthrow the Maduro government. Despite the multipronged war that the right-wing elite has unleashed against the poor majority, more than 6,2 million Venezuelans voted for Maduro's re-election compared to 1,9 million votes that were cast for Falcón (and his party known as *Progressive Advance*)! Another right-wing candidate, Javier Bertucci, an evangelical priest, won roughly 925 000 votes.

The main inference from a simple tally of votes is straightforward: even a Falcón-Bertucci electoral coalition would not have secured a victory for the

opposition because the sum total of their combined votes was less than 50% of what Maduro obtained. More importantly, voter trends in terms of social class matched the polarisation of previous elections. Unsurprisingly, Maduro attracted votes from the poor in the urban settlements and peasants in the countryside, whereas the middle class voted for the opposition.

While this electoral outcome paves the way for faster progress in the 'Bolivarian movement for 21st century socialism', as envisioned by the late Hugo Chavez, the electoral results also expose major contradictions that any anti-capitalist activist can neither overlook nor simply dismiss.

During the election campaign, for instance, Maduro had hoped to secure roughly 12 million votes for the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (United Socialist Party of Venezuela, PSUV). At that time, this optimism was consistent with the 20,5 million registered voters (the outcome of a roughly 8% ➔

➔ growth in registered voters) and historical participation rates hovering around 80%. However, in the May 2018 electoral cycle, actual voter turnout fell short of the anticipated numbers by a huge margin as slightly more than 9,3 million voters, or 46% of registered voters, cast their ballots for the three presidential contestants. This rate of abstention (54%) is unprecedented in the era of Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution and was mainly a consequence of the boycott campaign that factions of the opposition have orchestrated since the 2017 Constituent Assembly elections.

The boycott campaign of the opposition, however, has exposed deep fissures and gaping divisions among right-wing forces with the hard-core MUD (Democratic Unity Roundtable) factions chiding Falcon and Bertucci for lending legitimacy to a 'corrupt and authoritarian dictatorship'. Furthermore, large sections of the middle class and skilled workers have emigrated. Guesstimates suggest that Venezuelans living abroad account for roughly 3,5 million registered voters but almost all of them, except for an insignificant fraction, joined the boycott campaign.

Falcón campaigned on a typical neoliberal programme, with a former Wall Street banker advising him on economic affairs. Dollarisation, the centrepiece of his programme against hyperinflation, is more than just a switch from the *bolívar* to the US dollar as the new currency. If Venezuela adopts the US dollar then all its economic policies will be subject to the dictates of the US Federal Reserve and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This policy against Venezuela's economic sovereignty further prescribes radical austerity in the national budget (*The Economist*, 17 May 2018) which in effect means dismantling the social missions (in health care, education, food distribution, etc.) that have been the bedrock of the Bolivarian revolution.

Shortly after the Electoral Council and foreign observers announced the verified election results, declaring it a fair contest free of vote rigging, the defeated right-wing candidates refused to accept the results. They emphatically rejected it, asserting that it was a fraudulent election. The Trump administration

and Washington's allies in Latin America echoed this right-wing chorus, with the US Secretary of State tweeting "Sham elections change nothing..."

Imperialism is trying to ruthlessly strangle the economy of Venezuela through the new round of financial sanctions that America imposed on 21 May and thus force it to submit to its dictates. As the *Financial Times* reported: "Caracas is in partial default of its \$70bn of traded debt, and oil production, the lifeline of the economy, has dropped to the levels not seen in more than half a century. Foreign companies such as *ConocoPhillips* of the US are moving aggressively to reclaim money they are owed by the regime. So are the defaulted bondholders." (*Financial Times*, 19 May 2018) Clearly, as the political representatives of multinational corporations, the brutality of the American government knows no bounds when it comes to guarding the interests of these corporations.

In the meanwhile, imperialist states have amplified their warmongering and drumbeat of regime change to a deafening pitch. According to *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, 'Trump reportedly took his top officials by surprise in an Oval Office meeting (around August 2017), asking why the US could not intervene to remove the government of Nicolás Maduro on the grounds that Venezuela's political and economic unraveling represented a threat to the region'. (*The Guardian*, 5 July 2018) Foreign military invasion or a coup engineered through a wing of the armed forces is high on the agenda of the opposition after their resounding defeat in the presidential elections.

The 2018 election has unmasked, once again, the profound turmoil and dilemmas of Venezuela's splintered right-wing forces in their quest to seize political power with the unbridled backing of imperialism. Maduro's re-election also demonstrates the deep-rootedness of anti-imperialist convictions of the masses who ultimately constitute the indefatigable defenders of the gains of the unfolding Bolivarian revolution. ●

TRUMP'S STANCE ON JERUSALEM AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS

Trump, the US president, has once again shown what a divisive force he is in US society and internationally, in recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He has taken this step in spite of countless resolutions at the UN since 1967, that Jerusalem's final status be determined by direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Under previous presidents, Democrat and Republican alike, there was the pretence that the US was an honest broker in the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The US has consistently supported Israel's land grab of Palestinian territory on the West Bank and demanded ever more concessions from the Palestinians in their negotiations with Israel. The Israeli state's role as a counter-revolutionary force against Arab nationalism and the left in the Middle

East, is subsidised by the US to the tune of 3.8 billion dollars annually in military aid.

US imperialism has paid a big price diplomatically at the UN General Assembly for Donald Trump's unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and his instruction to the State Department to arrange for the US embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. There were 128 votes in favour of the resolution condemning the US action, including the traditional allies of the US, Germany, France and Britain. Only 8 countries, mainly tiny island states, besides the US voted against the resolution. In spite of US threats that it would cut off aid to countries supporting the resolution, the vote provides further evidence of the widespread rejection of Trump's policy on Israel. ➔

➔ Speaking at the Al-Azhar international Conference in support of Jerusalem in Cairo, Mahmoud Abbas, who presides over the “Palestinian Authority” under Israeli occupation, reaffirmed the Palestine Liberation Organisation’s (PLO’S) Central Council vote to withdraw from the Oslo peace accords and cease recognition of the Israeli state. He declared that the US had forfeited its status as facilitator of the peace process. When Trump, as punishment, threatened to halt US payments to Palestine that currently stand at \$310 million annually, Abbas’s spokesman, Nabil Rudeineh described his statement as “blackmail” He added that “Jerusalem is not for sale, neither for gold nor silver.”

Israel’s half a century occupation over the Palestinians is examined in a book by Jeff Halper, “War Against the People, Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification” (quoted in “The Longest Occupation” -International Viewpoint, 4 July 2017). He asks how Israel is able to sustain the occupation for over 50 years in spite of international opposition. While he refers to the well known reasons such as the supply and global control of oil, the power of the US domestic Israeli lobby and its Christian fundamentalist lobby, he provides a deeper reason for the enduring Israeli occupation. He highlights the occupation as a testing ground for the development of weapons, security systems, models of population control and tactics, without which Israel would be unable to compete in the arms and security markets. Israel, albeit as a junior partner of the US, uses these methods of control against subject peoples resisting the rule of their oppressors. Israel has emerged as a major military power, serving other big military powers and being recognised by them. Its position as a colonising power and imperialist ally has earned it pariah status among the nations of the world.

In particular, many African states, with whom it had established diplomatic ties, severed those relations because of its harsh treatment of Palestinians or when it engaged in wars with its Arab neighbours. Its economic ties with African countries have proved more durable. Israel has a

technologically advanced economy. This is apparent in the information, communications and technology sector, where its hardware and software play an important role. African states employ this technology together with Israel’s expertise in agro-processing and the water management spheres, in order to transform sectors of their own economies. Israeli policy is to use its economic muscle to build closer political and diplomatic ties with African states. In the past two years it has redoubled its efforts to strengthen ties with African states. In December 17, Israel signed an agreement with the US to increase energy access in Africa and reduce the continent’s electricity deficiency. The partnership is part of the \$7 billion, five year power project aimed at creating 60 million new connections in Africa by 2030. In July 2016 the Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu undertook a trip to East Africa, visiting Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda. This came at a time when Israel was launching a \$13 million aid package to strengthen economic ties with African countries. In June 2017 Netanyahu attended the annual Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit in Liberia. ECOWAS Agricultural Ministers had in the previous year attended an agricultural summit in Jerusalem titled “enhancing sustainable agricultural productivity in arid and semi-arid regions.” Mali and Niger, the two ECOWAS members who do not have diplomatic relations with Israel, did not send representatives. Israel’s aid to African states is by no means unconditional as demonstrated when following a vote at the UN Security Council that condemned Israeli settlements as illegal in 2017, the Israeli government severed aid to Angola and Senegal for their support of the resolution.

Not only has US imperialism under Trump’s leadership suffered a diplomatic defeat at the UN in recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, it has compromised its role in any future negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It and the pariah state, Israel remain tied to one another in perpetuating the occupation of Palestinian territory.

TRIBUTE: AK TSHANGANA

Albert Kwezi Tshangana, a stalwart of the Unity Movement and APDUSA, passed away on Sunday 10 June. He was 86 years of age. He is a rare example of a person who dedicated his life to the cause of liberation without any thought of material gain or self- aggrandisement. Born in Tsomo in the then Transkei, Kwezi sought work in Cape Town in the 1950s where he joined the movement, via the Society of Young Africa (SOYA). Right from the start, he proved himself

a dedicated member. He later joined Apdusa at its birth in 1961 and participated actively in all of its campaigns in the region. He maintained his commitment through the darkest years of the struggle when many were silenced by the state and others fell by the wayside. In 1971, he was arrested with hundreds of other APDUSA members throughout the country. He stood firm and was sentenced to five years imprisonment on Robben Island. ➔

➔ After his release he was prevented from returning to Cape Town. He eventually found work in Kimberley where he resumed his political activity. He became a shop-steward of The National Union of Mineworkers and later, in the 1980s, he set about single handedly building a dynamic branch of APDUSA in an area which the Unity Movement had not managed to maintain itself for many years. Kwezi contributed greatly to the re-establishment of APDUSA as a national organisation. After he was able to return to his home in Tsomo he became an elected organiser, touring the Eastern Cape, especially in the Pondoland region and rebuilding the organisational network. By 1996 his contribution to the building and maintenance of the APDUSA was fully recognised and he was elected to its presidency, in which position he served for a number of years.

Later, Kwezi played an important role in the documentation of the history of the Unity Movement as the main assistant of the academic researcher, Robin Kayser, which resulted in the important thesis, “Land and Liberty ! : The Non-European Unity Movement and the Land Question, 1933-1976”.

Throughout his years in the fold of the Unity Movement and APDUSA, Kwezi came to appreciate fully that the struggle could only reach fruition in a successful socialist revolution. Though he was not well known outside of Unity Movement circles the greatness of his contribution to the struggle cannot and will not be buried with him. His commitment stands as a shining example to the youth entering the struggle today.

APDUSA

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Despite the gain of political rights for all, the compromise of 1992 has not fulfilled the democratic aspirations of the labouring majority and they continue to suffer in conditions of abject poverty and subjugation to the will of the rich who command the economic resources of the country. In the ongoing struggle we therefore demand:

- The convening of a democratically elected **Constituent Assembly**, charged with the task of drawing up a new constitution, governed by the interests of the oppressed and exploited working class and peasantry, based on the demand for full, unfettered political rights for all with majority rule in a unitary state, the removal of all artificially created regional political boundaries, the liquidation of all special minority rights and privileges which militate against the interests of the majority. The Constituent Assembly must have full powers to discharge these duties, untrammelled by any directions and constraints designed to serve self-interested minorities.
- A resolution of the **land question** in accordance with the needs of those who work and live off the land. This means the destruction of all existing tribal and feudal relations in the rural areas and the nationalisation of the land, without compensation. A new division of the land and its management, which excludes forced collectivisation, the payment of rent and the expropriation of small peasant farmers, must be undertaken by committees that are democratically elected by and answerable to the people.
- The **expropriation** of all major industries, banks and institutions of credit and their management by the state and representatives of the workers in the interests of the population as a whole.
- The revision of labour legislation for the liquidation of all discrimination against the worker. This also means:
- The **right to work**, which must be implemented both via the institution of necessary adjustments to the length of the working week to provide employment for all, without a reduction in wages, as well as by the institution of a progressive **public works program** with the full representation of the unemployed in its management.
- The fixing of a living **minimum wage** as well as a sliding scale to compensate for any price increases.
- The unconditional right to **strike** which includes the right of occupation of the workplace.
- Free and **compulsory education** for all up to matric with free books for the needy.
- Free **health services** for the needy.
- A single, progressive **tax system**, the abolition of vat and all indirect taxes that fall so heavily on the poor.
- The elected representatives of the people, at organisational level or in the local, regional or national political institutions of state, must be fully **accountable** to those who elect them and they must be fully bound by the demands and aspirations of the working class and its allies, the landless peasantry.

APDUSA calls for the self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses. We believe that the struggle can only advance decisively via the greatest ideological and organisational unity between the workers in the urban centres and the peasants in the rural areas under the leadership of the working class.

The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants shall be paramount.

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